DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 399 939 IR 056 054

AUTHOR Kruger, Jan A.
TITLE Managing Media Centers in Secondary Schools.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 6p.; In: Dreams and Dynamics. Selected Papers from the Annual Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship (22nd, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia, September 27-30, 1993); see IR 056 045.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Media; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Futures (of Society); *Learning Resources Centers; *Library Administration; *Library Role; Media Selection; *Media Specialists; User Needs (Information)
IDENTIFIERS South Africa

ABSTRACT

Responsibility for media services in secondary schools has received little attention in discussions of media use in those schools. If education authorities agree that the media center is indispensable and it has a philosophy and policy to this effect, then attention must be paid to who should take responsibility for media services. The education authority functions on a macro management level, but must delegate specialized services to an organization which can take care of them. Educational media services function primarily as an ancillary service directed toward rendering service to education. The departmental library, concerned with information needs of administrators and teachers, finds a natural home within the media services department. Media advisors, who possess qualifications in teaching, library and information science, or educational technology, offer guidance on library matters as well as curricular and extra-curricular media use. Professional and technical services include making recommendations about purchasing media materials and developing lists of materials which can be used broadly within the school system. Ancillary service outside the education department, usually with community libraries, is sometimes a part of the media services offered. Micro management of media services departments generally falls within the scope of the media teacher. The paper also discusses media services in South Africa, and managing media centers in the future, as such services become more comprehensive. (Contains 10 references.) (SWC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 399 939

Managing Media Centers in Secondary Schools

by
Jan A. Kruger
Professor, Department of Information Science
University of South Africa
Pretoria

Introduction

Up to now relatively little has been written and published about managing media centers in schools. It is not quite clear why this should be so. Books dealing with media centers in general, usually include a brief discussion of the topic. What is found, however, is that most publications focus on the use of media in education, information skills, information retrieval and the selection of media with collection development in mind. These topics cover the two fields of expertise of the media teacher, namely education and library and information science. It seems as if management has been overlooked. Is the reason for this that the principal of the school is regarded as the manager of the school and that the media center is just a part of the school? (herring 1988:22). However, being in charge of the media center the media teacher must be regarded as a manager as well (Prostano & Prostano 1987:43). It is therefore desirable that attention should be paid to the management of the media center.

A second issue that is even more striking than the first, is the acceptance of the media center as a *sine qua non* for effective education and therefore part of every school. Authors comparing school media services of various countries, regions, or education departments, usually take this as their point of departure. They will compare two different systems after which certain conclusions are reached, without paying attention to the educational philosophy and policy that the edu-cation authorities have with regard to the role of media centers in education. This educational philosophy and policy is the cornerstone on which media centers are developed and utilized. Only systems where this cornerstone is present, can be juxta-positioned. Readers are given the wrong impression when comparisons are made as it is taken for granted that both systems are based on this important cornerstone and that the two systems are therefore comparable. These publications and articles focus on the role of the media teacher in curriculum development, the size and retrieval of the media collection, the physical facilities, curricular media used and the acceptance of the media teacher as part of the teaching team.

The Responsibility for Media Services

If the education authorities accept the media center as an indispensable and inseparable part of every school, and it has an educational philosophy and policy to this effect (*The Media Center* 1988:2), then attention can be paid to the question of who should take responsibility for media services. The answer to this question is, in fact, very simple. The responsibility lies with the education authority. The education authority can make certain arrangements to carry of this responsibility. These arrangements go hand in hand with the management of media centers.

Usually two levels of management can be distinguished as far as the management of media centers are concerned, namely the macro and the micro management levels.

Macro Management Level

The education authority functions on the macro management level. Due to the fact that media services are specialized services, education authorities delegate this function to an organization which can take responsibility for it on behalf of the education authority. In this pa per attention will be paid to two possible organizations which can provide school media services: first, the education media service as an ancillary service of the education department, and second, an organization outside the organizational structure of the education department.

The Education Media Service

Ancillary services functioning in the organizational structure of the education department, usually have an educational basis, because the functions of an education department are education and teaching. The primary function of an education media service as an ancillary service is therefore directed toward rendering a service to education.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Ken Haycock
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

IR056054

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The service rendered by an education media service can be divided into three main categories:

The Departmental Library

The departmental library is a special library that is concerned with the information needs of the officials, both professional and administrative, of the education department including all the teachers of that particular education department. Media teachers can therefore request professional literature from the departmental library to keep track of the latest developments in their field of interest. As the departmental library is a professional library and information service, it is just natural that it find a home within the organizational structure of the education media service.

Advisory Services

Media advisors possessing a teaching qualification and experience, together with either a qualification in library and information science or education technology, provide a very important service within the education media service. Media advisors visit schools on a regular basis to give guidance to the media teacher specifically, and to the principal and subject teachers in general. Qualified media advisors are in a position to give guidance on library matters as well as on media user education, and curricular and extra-curricular media use. Because they are, just as in the case of media teachers, in possession of a teaching qualification they are accepted by the principal and subject teachers as media specialists and consequently close cooperation exists between them. Naturally, their guidance to the media teacher includes advice on matters relating to the management of the media center. The media advisors operate on the macro management level and are not involved in the day to day management of the media center at the school. That is the function of the media teacher.

Professional and Technical Services

The education media service renders important professional and technical services on the macro management level. This organization is responsible for the planning and provision of physical facilities. This is done according to certain guidelines laid down by the education department as the mother organization. Professional guidelines are usually formulated by the education media service and then approved by the education department.

Professional services of the education media service include the provision of annotated buying lists of selected and recommended media. Items from these may be selected and ordered by media teachers for collection development. It must be borne in mind that many rural schools are situated far away from booksellers in the cities and are not in a position to visit the booksellers personally. The provision and availability of lists of recommended, graded media constitutes a valuable service to the media teachers. As part of this service, media are classified by professional librarians at the education media service to further ease the task of the media teacher.

Besides these services the education media service may provide complete sets of catalog cartds for the media included in the lists.

The education media service may sometimes purchase media and supply certain items to each school.

Ancillary Service Outside the Education Department

When the education department delegates its responsibility for media services to schools to an organization outside the organizational structure of the education department. It is usually to the organization that is involved with public library services. This often results in the establishment of combined school/community libraries situated at schools. Otherwise separate school and public libraries are found. Various examples of these two models exist all over the world.

It is not always clear whether there are people in this type of system who do work similar to that of the media advisors in the education media service. If so, it is important to know whether these people possess a teaching qualification and have teaching experience, as the primary function of the media center is

curricular media use which includes media user education. These are pedagogical functions. A media center which is a model in all respects, but is not used satisfactorily for curricular purposes, should have its right to existence questioned. In addition, one could ask whether the guidance provided on the macro management level, as well as the management of the media center, are pedagogically sound.

Micro Management Level

On the micro management level one finds the media teacher is in charge of the media center. The media teachers are the managers of the media centers. They are responsible for the execution of the functions of management on the micro management level. The training of the media teacher must, therefore, make provision for the execution of the functions of management. In those cases where media advisors operate on the macro management level, media teachers receive guidance from them on the management of media centers.

Often media teachers experience difficulties with the execution of their management functions. The ideal is for the media teachers to hold a senior position on the staff of the school. This will ease their task as managers because they can act with the authority that flows from their senior position. In education systems where the emphasis is on examinations, one finds that the senior positions are held by subject teachers who teach final courses. Unfortunately, too often the media teachers are junior and inexperienced teachers. The result of this situation is that they cannot act with authority in a meeting with experienced and senior subject teachers. That contributes toward a high staff turnover in the post of the media teacher, which in turn has a negative effect on the management of the media center. Continuity is of vital importance for successful management.

It is desirable to appoint a media committee to avoid and solve problems with regard to the management of the media center and poor curricular media use. From a certain perspective it can be argued that the media committee is operating on the meso management level, that means on a level between the macro and micro management level. The media committee comprises the principal of the school, who acts as chairman and the media teacher who acts as the secretary. Other members of the media committee should be the senior subject teachers, sometimes known as heads of department. Other members of the staff who are involved in extracurricular activities can also be co-opted. The primary function of such a media committee is to plan and promote curricular media use. The value of the media committee lies in the involvement of senior subject teachers in the media centers ' services. A by product of this greater involvement is closer cooperation between the subject teachers and the media teacher, an awareness of the management problems experienced by the media teacher, and an awareness of the gaps in the media collection. The media committee can make a contribution toward the elimination of these gaps.

Managing Media Centers in South Africa

Since unification in 1910, South Africa has enjoyed a stable education system. At the moment there are fourteen different education departments besides the four in the independent homelands of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei. Some critics describe these fourteen different education departments as fourteen different education systems. Others regard them as fourteen subsystems of the South African edication system due to the extent of their similarities.

With so many education departments, some differences obviously are noticeable. Some departments have an education media service and well-developed school media centers. In other departments, school media services are poorly developed, while in yet others school media services are almost non-existent. The situation depends very much on the educational philosophy and policy of the different education departments with regard to the role of media centers in education.

During the past decade, and more specifically since the beginning of 1990, South Africa has experienced dramatic changes. Primarily these changes are taking place in the political arena, but they have consequences for the arenas as well. Strong political pressure has been exercised to bring about the establishment of a single education department.

In the process of bringing about a single education department in South Africa, various far-reaching changes have already taken place in the education departments for white children. In the past only government and private schools existed, but since 1992 a third category, state-aided schools has been added. State and state-aided schools are now open to everyone while private schools have their own entrance re-

quirements. Prior to these changes state schools received substantial funds for the development of media centers. Since August 1992 when the new education dispensation for white children came into being, no more funds have been granted to schools for the development of media centers. At the moment it is not clear whether new state schools to be built will be provided with the physical facilities for media centers. A single education department for the whole of south Africa will be established on April 1, 1994, it is also not yet clear whether funds for media centers will be made available again after that date. It is, however, of vital importance that the education authority **must** explicitly formulate in its education policy the role it expects the media center to play with regard to teaching and learning. There should be a statement on the philosophy, aims, and objectives of the media center in its schools. If the media center's role is not explicitly formulated in the country's educational policy it will not figure in the curricula or examinations of the education system.

Managing Media Centers in the Future

As great uncertainty about the future of school media services in South Africa prevails at the moment, it is obvious that careful consideration is now being given to possible models that might be implemented.

One possible model is the combined school/community libtraries that are well known in South Australia. An alternative model is that of community libraries functioning primarily as public libraries, which can also be utilized by the pupils of the surrounding schools. These schools will not have their own school library or media center.

There are definitely other models worth considering as well. The fact of the matter is that if the education authority relinquishes its responsibility for media centers on the macro management level, a new body will have to fill the gap if the media center is to continue to exist. If it is the educational philosophy of the new education authority that media centers have no role to play in the new education system, then media centers in the state schools will become redundant. As far as state-aided and rpivate schools are concerned, it will lie in the hands of their individual management boards to formulate their educational philosophy and policy with regard to the role of the media center.

One possible model that needs to be considered is the continued existence of the present media center at a school. At present each school has a management board chosen democratically from the parent community. The principal and his deputy also serve on the board. The management board is involved in the general management of the school.

The instigation of a new body, the management committee, will be necessary to look after the media center specifically. The management board can ask the management committee to submit a draft of their policy with regard to the role of the media center in the particular school for consideration and approval.

The management committee should consist of at least one representative of the management board, the principal and/or the deputy principal, the media teacher, one representative of the media committee (which will constitute a subcommittee of the management committee), two or more members from the community (preferably chosen from people qualified as librarians and people involved in the training of librarians and more specifically media teachers, as well as people from the business community).

It will be the task of the management committee to take over the responsibility of the education media service on the macro management level if the education authority relinquishes its responsibility. If the management board of a particular school decides that a media center at the school is unnecessary, then a management committee for the media center will probably also be unncecessary, except if such a committee were to take up the challenge to persuade the management board to change its mind.

The management committee can appoint various subcommittees. Reference has already been made of the media committee which is responsible for planning and promoting curricular media use. Other subcommittees could take the responsibility for fund raising, cataloging and classification of newly-bought media, or for providing assistance at the reference and lending desks.

This management model could ease the management function of the media teacher tremendously. It would no longer be necessary for the media teacher to convince the principal or subject teachers of the importance of the media center. That would be the task of the management committee and its various subcommittees. By implementing this management model the continued existence of the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

media center should be ensured.

Bibliography

American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. *Information Power*. Chicago: ALA, 1988.

Gawith, G. A Future Information Generation: the Role of the School Library. *New Zealand Libraries*, 1986, 45 (3): 49-53.

Herring, James E. *School Librarianship*, 2nd edition. London: Bingley, 1988.

Kruger, J. A. "The School Library as an Integral Part of the School," *School Librarian*, 1987, 35 (2): 107-111.

The Media Centre: A Guide for Those Concerned with Media Centres and School Libraries. By C. M. Vink, J. H. Frylinck, J. A. Kruger and J. S. van Niekerk. Pretoria: Aacacia, 1988.

National Education Policy Investigation. 1992. *Library & Information Services: Report of the NEPI Library and Information Services Research Group: A Project of the National Education Coordinating Committee*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Prostano, Emanuel T. and Prostano, Joyce S. 1987. *The School Media Center*. 4th edition. Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited.

Smith, J. B. & coleman, J. G. From the editors, in *School Library Media Annual, Volume Ten*, edited by J. B. Smith and J. G. Coleman. Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1992.

University of south Africa. Department of Library and Information Science. *The Use of Libraries for the Development of South Africa: Final Report on an Investigation for the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science*. Pretoria: University of south Africa, 1988.

Yesner, B. L. & Jay, H. L. *The School Administrator's Guide to Evaluating Library Media Programs*. Hamden, Conn.: Library Professional Publications, 1987.